

HARVEST THANKSGIVING

771 sweeper; I heard only one muezzin sound the Call to Prayer—
 788 and saw no one pay heed to it. He was chanting from a cliff in
 the Mir's garden, and the Mir gathers round him craftsmen of
 ● 778 every sort. There are a few shrines in the country reputed
 796 holy—including two burial places of Moses within a few
 788 hundred yards of each other on one mountain side—where a
 few rags on sticks flutter unconvincingly in the wind; and one,
 the shrine of Baba Ghundi in Chupursan, some seven days'
 march above Báltít, is the object of an occasional pilgrimage.
 On Tuesdays and Fridays there are said to be services in the
 House of Assembly, which has supplanted the older Shiah
 mosque, but I never observed one of our servants or neighbours
 absent himself from work to go to them.

771 Yet the people are by no means without faith. It is difficult
 181 to know exactly what even church-going Christians of our own
 775 country effectively believe—it is impossible to be sure what
 one effectively believes oneself—so I can offer only a tentative
 guess as to the average person's simple credo. The Hunzukuts
 hold, I think, a comforting, unquestioning faith in a good and
 kindly God, whose ways they cannot profess to understand.
 They meet bereavement with a murmur that "there is no
 remedy against the will of God"; they bury their loved ones
 with genuine sorrow, but without anxiety. They feel that
 "it is well with the child," and vaguely trust that some day,
 somewhere, somehow, they will meet again. They assume as
 axiomatic that God asks of them diligence and truth, fair-
 dealing and goodwill. They are hard-working and thrifty,
 tolerant to others; kind and affectionate in the home, gentle
 to children and the aged; generous beyond their means to the
 orphan; truthful and just; and they go about their daily work
 in the happy confidence that God is well pleased. If they din
 no perfunctory prayers into His ears, there are occasions when
 they heartily and humbly pray, as will presently be seen.

771 The Hunzukuts is no mystic, no poet, no artist. This life
 181 claims his full attention if he is to live at all; philosophic
 speculation about "fixed fate, freewill, fore-knowledge abso-
 lute" does not line his brow or disturb his rest, nor does
 he "keep in duty through the toilsome day, because of praise

No. XXXI.

The Misgār Shrine, Aqtaah.

At Misgār there is a shrine of which the name is Aqtaah. In ⁵³⁹⁴ Turki they call a white stone "aq tash." The Kirgiz had given ⁷⁷⁸ it the name. ●

Then they say that oil used to come out of the stone. Its proper name in Turki was "yāghtaah." They call oil "yāgh." They used to call it the "Oil-Exuding-Stone."

In early times the Kirgiz were settled in Misgār. They had made this stone into a shrine for themselves. Even now the Misgāris go to it, and the men salām and the women wave their hands. And the Misgār people take goats and go there and sacrifice them. ⁷⁸² From old times they have fixed up horns on (the wall round) it, after they have been hunting.

Oil exudes from the stone.

That is all there is to tell.

8 *isets* — a note adds: *barltas deli baw* 'they fix them on the wall'. It is a com- ⁷⁷⁸ mon practice to fix horns on the enclosure walls of shrines and mosques.

10 *is* *danslom* — possibly means: 'from the environs of the stone' as opposed to *dantsum* (l. 3) 'from the stone itself'. But perhaps *danslom* — 'from inside the stone' — was intended.

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Past and Present Religions.

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The precepts and observances of the sect are difficult to ascertain, one of their sayings being that "a man should conceal his faith and his women;" and the little I have been able to ascertain is from Maulais who have proselytized, and those only men of no education.

Soonnees speak of them as "Kaffirs" and "Rafizi," but they themselves do not refuse to pray or eat with Soonnees. They are sometimes accused of worshipping Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, and accordingly styled "Ali-purust," and they undoubtedly esteem Ali, who, they say, was born of Light as superior to the Prophet Mahommed, and an incarnation of the deity. They reject the idea of a future state, believing in the transmigration of souls. Evil deeds are punished by the spirit being translated into a dog or other mean animal. Good actions are rewarded by a future incarnation as a great or holy man. They claim little in common with other sects of Mahommedans, saying, the Soonnee is a dog and the Shiah is an ass. They question the divine character of the Koran, though they say that it was entrusted to the Angel Gabriel to give to Ali, but that he gave it by mistake to Mahommed.

They use in place of the Koran a book called the Kalam-i-Pir, a Persian work, which is shown to none but men of their faith. The precept most commonly quoted by them is, that a man should blind himself, so that he should not be moved with envy at sight of his neighbour's prosperity; he should weaken his hands, so that they can grasp nothing belonging to others; and lame himself, that he may be unable to disobey the commands of his Pir. Cattle that have strayed into standing crops are not to be driven out till they have satisfied themselves. A good Maulai is already as one dead, prayers therefore are unnecessary, as also is fasting. If any forcible attempt should be made to cause a Maulai to fast, he should resist it by devouring a pinch of dust. The only pilgrimage enjoined is to the living head of their faith, who is styled the Imam-i-Zeman, or Sahib-i-Zeman. Marriage can be performed by any man whose beard is white. Seating himself with the bridegroom on his right hand and the bride on his left, he takes a few pieces of roasted sheep's liver in both hands, and crossing his arms gives them to the man with his left hand and to the woman with his right. Then taking a cup of water he gives half to the woman, and after he has said a few words out of the Kalam-i-Pir, the ceremony is completed. The form of the Maulai Kalima is

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